

127-4-1

A D D R E S S E S
ON
Washington and Lincoln
DELIVERED BEFORE THE
SEATTLE ROTARY CLUB
February 21, 1917

WASHINGTON

BY
FRED EVERETT

Last week we observed the day set aside to honor the memory of Lincoln who did so much to save our Union; today we honor the memory of Washington, who more than any other created our Union and gave us our Constitution.

It matters little to you or me the exact date of Washington's birth or death, but it is important that we know of the period in which he lived; some of the friends he had; some of the things he did.

In stature he was massive—over six feet tall; wore a number thirteen boot; was an athlete and a graceful and expert rider; and loved, above all, the open air existence and the wild life of the woods.

Washington was a born leader and always was guiding the destinies of others. In early boyhood he was the leader of his playmates; in youth he trained his fellows in military practice; in manhood he was commander-in-chief of our Revolutionary forces; and in his ripe and mellow years launched our Ship of State, set the compass and took the helm.

Aside from being a leader he had the rare ability to choose men; to weigh and value with a nice exactness the worth of men; also he was a brave soldier and a man of decision and these characteristics made him a successful general.

In his early life he was English in his nature and habits. He did not have an education of the Universities or of the Courts, but that of a hard

earned independence won by backwoods surveying and frontier fighting. He entered the Revolutionary War an aristocratic Virginian, but he emerged from the war a whole souled American. He went in a provincial, he came out a National character and in this he stood almost alone for at that time there were few men whose vision embraced the entire thirteen colonies. A majority of mature people had come direct from their fatherland and were dependent still for their lives and thoughts upon the breath of the old world. Then it was the exceptional man who traveled one-hundred miles from his home and was familiar with the lives and needs of a community other than his own.

He was serious and had little time for the lighter sides of life; he was attacked and assailed, both as a general and a president, but he was never laughed at.

Who were some of the men associated with Washington in this constructive period; men whose lives are familiar to us all; I mention only a few: John Adams, Lafayette, John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, Alexander Hamilton and Benjamin Franklin.

During the period following the Revolutionary War and prior to the adoption of our constitution Washington was engaged in preparing and doing the real constructive work towards the making of our constitution. He was a firm believer in neutrality and said, "We should maintain a strict neutrality and never forget that we are Americans, the remembrance of which will convince us that we ought not to be French or English." He was also, at all times, a firm believer in adequate preparedness for defensive purposes, but the great work that he rendered his Country was towards the making of our constitution for he, more than any other, was responsible for that document considered by authorities to be one of the masterpieces of constructive government.

The makers of our constitution came from every state and every delegate brought with him ideas and prejudices tinged with a local color. Each wanted his own kind of a constitution. Besides these individual characteristics which per-

meated the atmosphere the men were formed into groups, those of the French extraction wanted a constitution based on French law and the English wanted a constitution modeled after the English law and there were others who wanted to adopt certain English and certain French features and still others who wanted to form a constitution unlike any other form of government. For four months Washington presided over this convention guiding the deliberations, conciliating the rival factions and harmonizing the discordant elements and finally when it was completed was the first to sign. Washington could have made a Monarchy, but instead he founded a Republic.

Washington succeeded in reading into our constitution the best of his character, his philosophy, his wisdom, his statesmanship and his patriotism.

Washington had one purpose in life—liberty, equality, freedom for America. For this he fought and directed the Revolutionary War; for this he worked years to secure a constitution that would endure; for this he served as President two terms putting into operation the principles to which his life had been devoted.

The life of Washington furnishes a beautiful example of a successful man—his aspirations were realized. Success did not come to him easily; he had to struggle; he had to fight for everything he secured, but he had the ultimate satisfaction of seeing his dreams come true and his ideals realized.

We all have our ideals—the most practical business man has, at least, one ideal that of trying to raise himself from one gradation of success to another.

We are apt to judge a man entirely by what he accomplishes; we are prone to measure a man by what he produces, but we should judge a man not alone for what he is, but for what he would be. Many are deserving of success who through circumstances, outside of themselves, are deprived of it; many are compelled to watch the things they gave their lives to broken and stoop and build them up again with worn out tools; many must build anew life's broken archways

always fearing lest they may fall again and there come times in your life and in mine when we feel deeply with Goldsmith when he said, "I shall die and be forgotten and the world will pass on as if I had never lived; yet how I have loved; how I have longed; how I have aspired."

Washington was a man of unselfish motives. He refused pay for his services during the entire Revolutionary War; he worked for things larger than self and this work is what made him great. Service not self. Not in the abundance of what we have, but in the abundance of what we do for others.

The same principals that made Washington great over one-hundred years ago are working, in most of the Nations of the world today, as they have never worked before and on a scale never before known. You can see them in operation this very minute in the Country at our north. The moment the Canadian was willing and anxious to do his "bit," to enlist in a cause larger than self, a new empire was created and the Canada of 1917 is not the Canada of 1914.

Every Nation that has lived out its own existence has passed successively through the stages of poverty, industry, thrift, competence, wealth, opulence, decay and ruin. Within the memory of every one of us, consciously or unconsciously, we have seen our Country pass through the stages of thrift, competence, wealth and opulence and, as viewed by many countries of the world today, we are now in the process of decay. Our own statesmen say the manhood of our Country is becoming soft and we are referred to, by many peoples of the globe, as being the Country, "Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

I once read a biography of Lord Nelson (I wish I had the time and the words to adequately describe that eventful day I spent in London in 1905 when they celebrated the one-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar and the death of Lord Nelson and could describe how England honors her heroes) and the author, in summing up the life of Lord Nelson, in the closing sentence said, "Nelson knew how to do

three things, he knew how to love, he knew how to fight and he knew how to die."

In this impending crisis, which may be upon us this very moment, rest assured that the American will find himself and that he too will know how to do these three things; to love his Country; to fight to preserve those rights which by the common consensus of the judgment of mankind is the established standard below which we **SHOULD NOT** fall, below which we **MUST NOT** fall, and below which we **WILL NOT** fall; and finally to die if needs be for a cause worth while.



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY

JOHN L. HALL

In this short winter month are two days consecrated to the memory of the two foremost figures in American history, the birthdays of Lincoln and Washington. With the annual recurrence of these days come recollections persuading us to turn aside from the jostling avenues of business, and give quiet rein to the higher emotions and aspirations of our being,—among which none is nobler than patriotic devotion to our own native land. And nothing places our just pride of country on firmer footing than to recall the lives of her illustrious men.

Today we are permitted to pay our brief and humble tribute of respect to the memory of one who belongs to all time and all people, a stalwart figure both in body and spirit, of whom an admiring world exclaims Behold a man! The history of our race is enriched by his story;

the pulse of our nation quickened, its life purified by the warm blood that coursed through his veins. He lingers in our thoughts, appeals to our pride, exemplifies our fondest conception of an American citizen, Abraham Lincoln.

Of his own early life, Lincoln modestly said "It is well described in one line of Grey's elegy:

'The short and simple annals of the poor'".

It was an obscure corner of Kentucky where the child Lincoln first saw the light of day, one hundred and eight years ago; his birth place a log cabin, roofed with purlins and clapboards of oak, its walls chinked with wood and daubed with clay. A big fireplace chimney built of sticks occupied the west gable end. A battened door and small square window pierced the sunny side of the house. On the hearth glowed the fire of hickory wood, and in the cast iron covered skillet, with live coals raked beneath and heaped on top, were baked the coarse corn dodgers of the pioneer's simple fare.

Here, unhindered by the conventions of more highly organized society, Nature, the will of God made manifest, wrought on this lump of human clay and modelled a man signally responsive to the influences that shape the destinies and mold the opinions of the masses of men. Beyond the heritage of an ample, though somewhat ill-proportioned frame, it appears Lincoln owed little to his sire. His mother, young and handsome, was a woman of intelligence and fine qualities. Nearly fifty years after her untimely death, Lincoln remarked to William H. Seward: "All that I am or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother. Blessings on her memory."

After his mother, the potent influence of Lincoln's boyhood home was that of his step-mother, toward whom it is said he bore through life the attitude of an affectionate and grateful son.

Lincoln never went to college. He was only five or six months in the public schools. His education was almost entirely self-acquired. Yet, it was sufficient to make of him a good lawyer, a forceful debater, the leading politician of his day, and a man whose use of the English language does honor to his mother tongue.

Lincoln was of a genial and friendly nature, though possessed of great physical strength. Moving with the family in early life to Indiana and later to Illinois, he grew up busied with various employments, both mild and strenuous. But, whether he clerked in the village store or wielded the woodman's heavy axe or maul, he was always a student and was blessed with a retentive memory.

With increasing knowledge, he stored a wealth of anecdote to enliven his conversation and minor public speeches. From his experiences as a deck hand on the Sangamon River, he drew in later life a picture to confound a wordy and irresponsible lawyer that opposed him in a jury trial. Lincoln remarked: "When my learned friend begins to speak, his mental processes altogether cease." He was reminded of a boat with a five foot boiler and seven foot whistle, that couldn't get up enough steam to run the boat and whistle at the same time. Whenever it whistled, the boat stopped.

Reflecting the purity of his mind, the stories told by Lincoln were always clean and wholesome. He never used his superior strength to play the bully, nor would he use the diviner gift of speech to offer needless offense. His more important discourses were notably free from anecdote or embellishment of any kind. His arguments were sealed with plain and cogent reasoning.

Neither Lincoln's command of the language nor his skill as a debater was by any means accidental. Having access to few books, he read with eagerness his Bible, Shakespeare, Aesop, and Blackstone. As a young man, he entered freely into the activities of the neighborhood debating societies. As a trial lawyer, he had almost daily practice in public speaking. As a rising politician and legislator, he was accustomed to discuss the political issues of the day, and as candidate for United States Senator in 1858, made many political speeches.

In the summer and fall of that year occurred the memorable joint debates between Abraham

Lincoln and the "little giant" Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, who was the opposing Democratic candidate seeking return to the senate.

Those political meetings possessed a picturesque human interest unlike anything known to this generation. The dates and places all being advertised in advance, the morning of an appointed day saw the surrounding country for many miles arise of one accord and move along the dusty lanes toward the place assigned. From neighboring towns the opposing candidates came, with processions of men and vehicles and enveloped in a glorious cloud of dust. Farmers and their sons clad in homespun, their wives and daughters in gingham and calico, found seats in the grove where assembled a vast throng of cheering partisans. The speakers arrived. The short rotund Douglas with sonorous and resonant voice, and a self-confident air. The gaunt, ungainly, long-legged Lincoln, full six feet four inches tall, with his thin high pitched voice,—soon, however, to speak with a depth of conviction that commands respect. And there was cheering and music!

The thrilling effect of these events on the minds and hearts of our rural ancestors is left to your imagination. The first speaker was given an hour for opening and half hour for closing; the second speaker an hour and a half,—the order of speakers being reversed at successive meetings. Three hours of debate were thus heard at each session. Many followed the speakers from place to place and heard the entire series of discourses. The debates were given wide publicity, and although Douglas was enabled to resume his seat in the senate, Lincoln's frank and forceful campaign stamped him as a national character, and two years later he was chosen President by the largest popular majority recorded since the days of Washington.

Douglas was the leader of his party, a man well known nationally, skilled in the art of debating, haughty and regardless of the feelings of an opponent. He looked with contempt upon Lincoln and his political friends who aided in the formation of what Douglas was pleased to

call the "black republican party." Here, now, was the supreme effort and opportunity of the comparatively unknown Lincoln. He made the effort, seized the opportunity, proved his worth. He answered squarely a series of questions propounded to him by Douglas, on condition he be allowed to ask an equal number of his opponent. By the failure of Douglas to answer whether he thought slavery to be wrong, and by his past course in the senate, Lincoln proved what the answer must be,—that Douglas did not think so.

Douglas declared it to be the privilege of any state or territory to accept or reject slavery for itself as it saw fit, and did what he could while in congress to place slavery on that footing, claiming it to be the basis on which the Union was formed, and the only way to secure lasting peace between the states. He argued that Lincoln was trying to stir up sectional dissension by opposing the spread of slavery into the territories.

Lincoln, on the other hand, pointed out that although some of the original territories came into the Union with slaves and others without them, the framers of the constitution were careful to guard against the extension of slavery. He contended further that every measure adopted since the formation of the Union having for its purpose the extension of slavery had engendered strife and bitterness.

In one of his public speeches, Lincoln had said "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe the government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest its progress and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward until it becomes alike lawful in all the states, north as well as south."

On these issues Lincoln and Douglas stubbornly defended their respective views before their constituents and before the world, reviewing the

history of our nation from its beginnings, and exerting an influence on the mind and conscience of the American people that went far to shape the course of later events.

Lincoln had come to love the plain people. He said "God must have loved them or he would not have made so many of them."

The life and public acts of Lincoln were ruled by one thought above all others, the principle of human freedom as voiced by the founders of our republic in the preamble to the Declaration of Independence, which he often quoted: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created free and equal and endowed with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

From the day when he witnessed as a young man an auction sale of negro slaves at New Orleans until the day when he issued as president the emancipation proclamation, the growing convictions and broadening influence of Lincoln well illustrate the lines of Tennyson:

*"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing
purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the
process of the suns."*

Neither the mental nor social inferiority of the black race was apparent to anyone more clearly than to Lincoln; but to his understanding "all men" included the negro, whose equality with the white man as solemnly declared by our fathers embraced a right to worship the same Creator, a right to earn his bread in the sweat of his brow, and a right to peaceful pursuit of happiness.

False or foolish sentiment played no part in the important acts of the great emancipator. Long and earnestly desiring the freedom of the slaves, he hoped it might come about by gradual and peaceful means. Immediate emancipation had no place in his original program, either as president or as commander-in-chief. Patriotism was a ruling passion with Lincoln. His first duty was to save the Union,—with or without slavery.

Being endowed with a great and a free mind, his course was determined by the compelling logic of events. When convinced the Union could not be saved with slavery, he wrote the proclamation of freedom; then called his cabinet about him to tell them what he had done.

The results were assured.

Today we recall with tender memories the fast fading ranks of the Blue and the Gray. The issues they submitted to the final test are settled for all time. This people shall no more go forth to conquest or bring home captives from foreign shores; but if we be again called to arms, it must only be in defense of the eternal principles of freedom and justice to which our united land and people are forever dedicated.

The tasks assigned to Lincoln were hard. In those dark days of the republic, this man was burdened with a load of responsibility no less real, and for him scarcely less heavy than the cares of the Divine One of whom the prophet said "Surely he hath borne our griefs—and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all". This humble American, ever relying on the spirit of the meek and lowly Nazarene for counsel and strength, has won for himself the sacred title "Savior of his country."

The dignity and honor accorded a noble character in all times point the surest road to enduring success. This countryman of ours, springing from lowly condition and by his own manly virtues rising superior to his environment until he was exalted to the highest honor within the gift of mortal men, gives hope and courage to all who come after him. As we pass this way but once, it is fitting that we pause to consider the elements of greatness in this wonderful man Abraham Lincoln.

Simplicity, sincerity, straight-forwardness are the salient attributes of his character. Honesty, truth and justice are woven into his every fiber. His statements in debate, even under great personal provocation, are singularly free from exaggeration or equivocation. As a lawyer he would not take a case unless he could handle it without resort to trickery of any kind.

Lincoln was modest, unassuming, easily approached, kind-hearted, and considerate of the rights and interests of others. Usually inclined to put himself in the back-ground, he had yet the strength of purpose to assert himself when occasion demanded. It became necessary for Lincoln to make use of other men to accomplish the great work in which he was engaged. The events of the Civil War called for the exercise of great patience and forbearance; and yet he found time to express to his generals and others his unstinted appreciation when they did faithfully and well the work they had to do.

If Lincoln was ever unjust, he erred on the side of mercy. The tenderness of his great heart saved the life of many an erring soldier. Mr. Carpenter, the artist who lived six months in the White House while painting the picture of Lincoln and his cabinet, tells of an elderly lady who found her way there one day to intercede for her son who had been tried by court martial and sentenced to be shot. After hearing the case, Lincoln pardoned the soldier boy. On her way out the mother broke her silence by exclaiming "I knew it was a copperhead lie!" What do you refer to, Madam, asked Mr. Carpenter overhearing the remark. "Why, they told me he was an ugly looking man. He is the handsomest man I ever saw in my life."

And so today, my friends, as we contemplate the life and character of the martyred Lincoln in the mild and softening perspective of time, that towering figure, those rugged, homely, pensive features seem as a darkened glass through which but dimly we see a shining spirit lighting the pathway and beckoning on to better things. And that strangely unmusical voice, heard no more among men but now attuned to the music of the spheres, is calling each one of us to the achievement of his own highest, most cherished ideals.